

DEVARĀJA IN CAMBODIAN HISTORY

The word Devarāja, its counterpart Khmer expression *Kamraten Jagat ta Rāja/Rājya* and the term *Liṅga* in Cambodian inscriptions, as well as the archaeological monuments designated “temple mountains” became shrouded in mystification, in esoteric and enigmatic royal rites, because the word Devarāja was translated as “God-King”. The symbolic rites of the Classical worlds of Greece and Rome, with the new element of authority introduced by the development of Christianity, has unconsciously conditioned European interpretations of Cambodian history. I am reminded of Synesius: “Aristotle is of opinion that the initiated ... received impressions, which were put into a suitable frame of mind” (Aristotle, *Fragments*, ed. E. Heitz, Leipzig, 1869:40). Temples to Roman emperors as gods, routinisation of their charisma in precise imperial cults have unwittingly affected the entire discussion of Devarāja as “God-King”, particularly in the theorisation of Coedès: “men were worshipped as gods” (Kulke xv). Kulke finds no evidence of deification of living beings in India (xv). Devarāja does not designate the kings of Cambodia (xvii), and the considerations of Filliozat (1966:103) disprove the divinisation of Angkorian kings. Filliozat asks: “who was venerated in Angkor as devarāja, Śiva or the Cambodian kings?” He showed on the basis of South Indian sources that in Devarāja Śiva was venerated.

Majumdar (1944:77) attributes three meanings to Devarāja that are supposed to emerge from the interpretation of the Sdok Kak Thom

(SKT) inscription:

- (i) Cult of Devarāja.
- (ii) Liṅga which represented the essence of royal authority conceived as divine, hence regarded as the tutelary deity, and placed in a temple on top of a mountain.
- (iii) A Tantric ritual or ceremony.

The word Devarāja occurs for the first time in the 29th stanza of the SKT:

*dvijas samuddhṛtya sa śāstra-sāraṁ rahasya-kauśalya-dhiyā
sayatnaḥ/
siddhīr vāhantīḥ kila devarājābhikhyāṁ vidadhre bhuvana-rddhi-
vṛddhyai//*

Coedès (1946:96) translated it into French: «Ce brahmane ayant, avec l'intelligence et l'expérience des mystères, extrait soigneusement l'essence des çāstras, établit, pour l'accroissement de la prospérité du monde, les rites magiques (*siddhi*) qui portent le nom du Devarāja».

It has been translated into English by Chakravarti (1980:2.19) as follows: «After carefully extracting the quintessence of the śāstras (sacred texts) by his experience and understanding of the mysteries, this brāhmaṇa established the magical rites bearing the name of Devarāja for the sake of increase in the prosperity of the world».

Chakravarti follows Coedès in interpreting *devarājābhikhyāṁ vāhantīḥ siddhīr vidadhre* "he established the magical rites carrying the name of devarāja". All these words are replete with imperial perceptions and rites. The stanza becomes clearer in its prose order: *sa dvijaḥ sayatnaḥ rahasya-kauśalya-dhiyā śāstra-sāraṁ samuddhṛtya devarājābhikhyāṁ kila vāhantīḥ siddhīr bhuvana-rddhi-vṛddhyai vidadhre*. Three words in it are crucial. *Devarāja* means "King of the Gods" and not "God-King". He is Indra and refers to the highly efficacious *aindra mahābhiṣeka* of the Ṛgvedic *rājasūya* tradition as elaborated in the *Aitareya-brāhmaṇa*. It was not a simple but a great coronation, a *mahābhiṣeka*. It was of extraordinary significance that Jayavarman II performed a Ṛgvedic rite, which lent him charismatic authority. This ritual objectified and institutionalised his charisma. This routinisation guaranteed his authority which was lent further supernatural and divine force by the four Āgamic rites. This is brou-

ght out by the Ṛgvedic word *abhikhyā* which means “gracious look” in RV.10.112.10, and it occurs in RV 8.23.5 *abhikhyā bhāsā bṛhatā śusukvaniḥ* in the meaning “lustre, brilliance, glory, halo”, and the Naigh. 3.9 equates it with *prajñā*. The renown, and splendour ensuing from the performance of the Devarāja ceremonies of coronation was strengthened by Āgamic rites, and was a major step introduced by Jayavarman II. The *aindra mahābhiṣeka* was usually followed by an *aśvamedha*, the dream of kings of the Hindu Kulturkreis. In the *Aitareya-brāhmaṇa*, *cakravartins* are anointed, conquer all around the earth and perform *aśvamedha*. The last two *cakravartins*, being not kings (*arājā*), are not credited with *aśvamedha*.

Siddhi refers to Āgamic rituals intended for the *ṛddhi* or prosperity, fortune, wealth and supernatural power of the state. The *ṛddhi* lasts till the virtues of the king, as it is said in Hemacandra’s *Parīṣiṣṭaparvan* 8.313 *yāvatpunyāṁ hi ṛddhayaḥ*. The form *dadhre* is from the root *dhṛ*, and implies that these rites upheld and sustained the kingdom. The prefix *vi* is intensive in meaning and refers to the stabilisation of the kingdom of Jayavarman II on two levels: Vedic and Āgamic. It was made firm by the four Āgamic rites which diminished (*vināśikha*) and destroyed (*śiraścheda*) the might of enemy kings by politics of deception (*sammoha*) and superior diplomacy (*nayottara*): prudence in polity leads to success (*prakṛṣṭa-naya-pāṭavāt* in *Parīṣiṣṭaparvan* 8.84). The full import of *vidadhre* becomes evident from the Khmer portion of the inscription which says that King Jayavarman II came from Java to Indrapura in Cambodia (C61). He invited brāhmaṇa Hiranyadāma to conduct a ceremony (*vidhi*) which should prevent this land of Kambuja from ever being dependent (*āyatta*) on Java, and to bring about instead that there should be only one single “Lord of the lower earth” (= king; Khmer *kmrateñ phdai karom*), who would be *cakravartin* (C71-73). Thus, *vidadhre* means the complete stabilisation of the kingdom through the performance of *siddhis*. The translation of *vidadhre* as “établit ... les rites magiques (*siddhis*) qui portent le nom du Devarāja” by Coedès (1946:96) is not correct. In this case the Sanskrit expression would have been *vidadhe* “performed”. The inscription uses the word *hotṛ* in stanza 27 (A54), and *rājahotā* in stanza 129 (D1). The *hotṛ* is a priest who recites the Ṛgveda, as one of the four officiating priests (*hotṛ*, *adhvaryu*, *brahman* and *udgātṛ*). He is

specifically a Ṛgvedic priest concerned with Ṛgvedic rites. The role of the *hotṛ* in Cambodia confirms that Devarāja is Indra and it refers to the Ṛgvedic rite of *aindra mahābhiṣeka* described at length in the *Aitareya-brāhmaṇa* of the Ṛgveda. Śivakaivalya is actually called a *hotṛ* in the SKT inscription (st. 27).

According to the *Aitareya-brāhmaṇa* (Aufrecht 221, Keith 329) the *mahābhiṣeka* or great coronation rite of Indra was for great kingship, for suzerainty, for supremacy, for pre-eminence. The first step of this rite was that the king mounted the throne. The second step was a proclamation by the Viśve-devāḥ: "Do ye proclaim him, O gods, as overlord and overlordship, as paramount ruler and father of paramount rulers, as self ruler and self rule, as sovereign and sovereignty, as king and father of kings, as supreme lord and supreme authority. The lordly power hath been born, the Kṣatriya hath been born, the suzerain of all creation hath been born, the enjoyer of the folk hath been born, the breaker of citadels hath been born, the slayer of the Asuras hath been born, the guardian of the holy power hath been born, the guardian of the law hath been born". The third and final step was anointment or coronation by Prajāpati, and by four classes of gods in the four directions (Vasus in the east, Rudras in the south, Ādityas in the west, Viśvedevāḥ in the north) and in the middle and upwards with the following *mantra*: "Anointed with this great anointment Indra won all victories, found all the worlds, attained the superiority, pre-eminence and supremacy ..." (*ib.* 331). The *Aitareya-brāhmaṇa* (Aufrecht 224, Keith 331) says that this *mahābhiṣeka* applied to all *kṣatriya* kings: "If he who knows thus should desire of a Kṣatriya 'May he win all victories, find all the worlds, attain the superiority, preeminence and supremacy over all kings, and overlordship, paramount rule, self rule, sovereignty, supreme authority, kingship, great kingship and suzerainty; may he be all encompassing, possessed of all the earth, possessed of all life, from the one end up to the further side of the earth bounded by the ocean, sole ruler', he should anoint him with this great anointing of Indra". (Keith 336f).

In the *Aitareya-brāhmaṇa* the gods are led by Prajāpati when Indra is enthroned on the symbolic throne called *ṛc*, which is descri-

bed as follows:

two front feet	bṛhat and rathantara	Supported by
two back feet	vairūpa and vairāja	Savitṛ and Bṛhaspati
head & foot planks	śākvara and raivata	Vāyu and Pūṣan
cross planks	naudhasa and kāleya	Mitra and Varuṇa
lengthwise ropes	ṛc verses	Aśvins
cross-ties	sāmans	
holes	yajuṣes	
coverlet	glory	
pillow	prosperity	

Prajāpati is the Purohita who addresses him with a verse and anoints him with a branch of *udumbara*. Thus enthroned and anointed, “he became the supreme authority, as connected with Prajāpati” (Keith 331).

The *aindra mahābhiṣeka* was performed for twelve *cakravartin* kings who are named in the *Aitareya-brāhmaṇa* along with their anointing priests (Keith 331-339) in the chapter on the *mahābhiṣeka* of kings:

King	Priest
1. Janamejaya Pārikṣita	Tura Kāvaṣeya
2. Śāryāta Mānava	Cyavana Bhārgava
3. Śatānika Sātrājita	Somaśuṣman Vājaratnāyana
4. Āmbāṣṭhya	Parvata and Nārada
5. Yudhāṁśrauṣṭi Auḡrasainya	Parvata and Nārada
6. Viśvakarman Bhauvana	Kaśyapa
7. Sudās Paijavana	Vasiṣṭha
8. Marutta Āvikṣita	Samvarta Āṅgirasa
9. Aṅga	Udamaya Ātreya
10. Bharata Dauḡṣanti	Dīrghatamas Māmateya
11. Durmukha Pāñcāla	Bṛhaduktha
12. Atyarāti Jānamtapi	Vāsiṣṭha Sātyahavya

The chapter on *rājasūya* (Keith 309f) begins: Prajāpati created the sacrifice. After the creation of the sacrifice, he created the holy power and the lordly power. He created the offspring that eat the oblations and are the holy power that leads to lordly power. The brahmins are foundation of royal power, and the king dare not violate their wishes. The last *cakravartin* Jānamtapi, though not a king, conquered

everywhere. His *purohita* Vāsiṣṭha Sātyahavya said: you have conquered the earth entirely on every side; make me great. The king said: «O Brahman, when I conquer the Uttarakurus then you would be the king of the earth and I your general». The *purohita* replied that is a place of the gods, no mortal man may conquer it. You have been false to me, therefore I take this from you. His strength taken away and he having lost his power, king Śaibya killed him. Therefore one should not play false with a brahman: “Let me not loose my kingdom, nor my breath forsake me”. The *Aitareya-brāhmaṇa* devotes the next chapter (Keith 339f) to Purohitaship. The gods do not entertain the offerings of a king who does not please a *purohita*. In appointing a *purohita* the king propitiates the gods and they carry him to the world of heaven, to the lordly power, the might, the kingdom and the people. A king, who has a *purohita* to guard the kingdom with knowledge, conquers lordly power, attains might and overcomes all hostilities. The *Aitareya-brāhmaṇa* clearly states: “he who knows the dying round the holy power, round him the rivals that vie with and hate him die”. The passage is long in proclaiming death to the enemy and it concludes that by these rituals king Sutvan saw that five kings round him died and he attained greatness. “Even if his enemy has a head of stone, swiftly he lays him low”. This is echoed in *śiraścheda* of the SKT inscription.

Jayavarman II established his residence in the city of Māhendraparvata (SKT st. 25): *Jayavarman-mahībhṛto mahendr-āvanibhṛn-mūrddha-kṛtāspadasya*. Its Cambodian version runs (C 56): *man vraḥ pāda parameśvara pratiṣṭhā kamrateñ jagat ta rāja (KJR)* “*nau nagara śrī-māhendraparvata*” “then His Majesty Parameśvara (= Jayavarman II) consecrated the KJR icon in the metropolis of Śrī Māhendraparvata”. Māhendra-parvata (with long *mā*) is the mountain raised for the māhendra coronation of Jayavarman II. The term māhendra is equal to aindra and is a direct reference to the *aindra mahābhiṣeka*. Māhendra “belonging to Great Indra” is actually employed in Buddhist Tantric ritual for the evocation of the Meru. Thus Māhendra-parvata refers to the pyramidal structure of Meru created in an open space for the aindra coronation of Jayavarman II, as the symbolic centre of the kingdom, the nagara, overlooking the royal palace situated on level ground. In the Buddhist Tantric rites a

golden spot of earth which belongs to Mahendra is sanctified. On it appears Sumeru surrounded by continents and the seven jewels of the state, and by two symbols of royalty: the sun and the moon. On the summit of Sumeru is the Sudarśana palace of Indra (Wayman 1973: 101-109). This coronation was for invincible security and uninterrupted stability of the kingdom further fortified by the four Āgamic rites ending in *śiraścheda* "beheading". Decapitation of the enemy king was a critical issue for the survival of the Cambodian state, and personally for Jayavarman II. The Javanese had beheaded the king of the Khmers and carried away his head to Java. The young Jayavarman II was taken to the court of the Javanese Maharaja as a hostage. On return, he was chosen King by the ministers of the beheaded monarch. The *śiraścheda* (beheading) rites conducted at the instance of Jayavarman II were to avenge the beheading of his predecessor as well as to preempt its recurrence. Tantric rites were a prelude to conquests or for stemming apprehended aggression. Kublai Khan got initiated into Hevajra in 1264 and again in 1269 for victories in his Southeast Asian campaigns. King Kṛtanagara obtained the more powerful empowerment of Guhyasamāja Akṣobhya to ward off the imperial designs of Kublai Khan (Lokesh Chandra 1995:156).

The pre-eminence of the King had to be sustained by constant vigil and by sustained efforts to minimise the position of rival kings by defence preparedness, by taking away (*vinā*) their crest (*śikha*) or glory and eminence, by strategies of deception (*sammoha*), and by all-round effective diplomatic manoeuvres (*nayottara*). While these terms stand for Āgamic texts and rites, at the same time they imply royal exigencies by *double entendre*. These rites for vanquishing rival kings are mentioned only in the SKT inscription. They were intended to preempt any future Javanese aggression or claims of suzerainty. This is explicit in the Cambodian part of the inscription which says in lines 71-73: "Then there came from Janapada a Brāhmaṇa, Hiranyadāma by name, who was proficient in the art of magic, because His Majesty Parameśvara had invited him to perform a supplementary ceremony so as to make it impossible for this country of Kambuja to become dependent on Java (and) to realize that only the master of the inner surface (i.e. His Majesty Parameśvara) become a sovereign ruler" (Chakravarti 1980:2.95). "Master of the inner surface" (*kamrateṇ phdai karom*)

means that only an indigenous king, an insider (not an outsider), should be the sovereign of Cambodia. *Phdai* "the surface of the earth, area of the soil", *karom* "interior, lower part". It has the same significance as the modern Indonesian term *bhumiputra*.

The folk legends of Cambodia preserve the memory of Jayavarman-II as deriving his power from Indra. He is held as the son of Indra under the name of Preas Ket Mealea "The Floral Light". The legend runs as follows:

Oh! marvel. There reigned in those days a virtuous king named Vong Aschar, a powerful Prince, who showered benefits upon his people. The queen, his spouse, the beauteous Teyvodey (Devatā), was surrounded by an innumerable bevy of fresh and supple maidens who waited upon her day and night. One hundred and one vassal princes paid the king tribute, bringing continuously presents of all kinds. Incalculable were the riches of this monarch. Precious stones, gold, silver, bracelets, carpets, silks, embroideries and figured stuffs. Countless were the elephants, the chariots, the horses, the litters, the canopies, the parasols, the fringed curtains and the golden garlands. Innumerable were the warriors of all arms, all armies and the lords and ladies who adorned the king's Court.

But Great Indra, looking down upon his favourite Land of the Khmers, noted that its King and Queen were childless. So taking advantage of the Queen's being without the palace, Great Indra floated down towards earth as a blaze of blue, so that men shouted: "Light is descending upon us". Then Great Indra wooed and won the Queen, not in a shower of gold, but in a rain of blossoms, whereby she was got with child. And when she brought forth her son she named him Preas Ket Mealea, that is the 'The Floral Light'.

Great Indra swept up his earth-born son, Preas Ket Mealea, into his bosom so that the child might be shown the glories of Tāvātimsa, or Paradise, and thus be assured of long life upon earth and among men. To render more certain his son's length of days, the divine father bathed the boy seven times a day for seven days in a pool of miraculous waters.

For his son's coronation, Great Indra deigned to visit this earth of ours, and to give to his child's realm its name of Kambuja while establishing its divine institutions. Moreover, he confided to the Khmers

the Sacred Sword (Prah Khan), which is the lightning of Indra, and is kept to this day in the royal palace (Brodrick 1947:176-177).

Indra is closely associated with the coronation of Jayavarman II and his coronation rites are alive through the Sacred Sword Prah Khan bequeathed by him. This Sacred Sword is kept in a pavilion to the left side of the Throne Palace. It is the palladium of the realm, the lightning of Indra confided to the rulers of the Khmer kingdom. It must be kept spotless. To withdraw the Sword from its scabbard without propitiatory rites would induce catastrophe to the realm.

Cambodia's royal ritual was taken over by Thailand, and naturally Indra plays an important role in the coronation ceremonies of Thailand from the mid-fourteenth century upto the present day. King Luthai of the Sukhothai dynasty wrote Thailand's most remarkable work *Trai Phum* "The Three Worlds", which is a comprehensive description of Buddhist cosmology and is essential to understand Thai theories of a cakravartin. King Luthai and later Thai rulers have been interested in three realms of the humans, of the Four Guardian Kings and of Indra's beaven in the *Trai Phum*. The realm of humans is composed of four great continents where people live under a *cakravartin*. Next is the realm of the Catur-mahārājika, and still higher is the realm of Tāvātimsa or the heaven of the Thirtythree Gods ruled by Indra. They have served as models for the rulers of SE Asia. The earthly king emulates Indra and himself becomes Indra. Indra's palace is situated on the top of Meru and so also were the palaces of SE Asian kings: "In emulation of Indra, whose palace is regally situated at the exact tip of the cosmic Mount Meru, Theravada kings traditionally build their palaces at the symbolic centres of their kingdoms. Thus, the earthly king himself becomes Indra. "Indra" appears twice in the official name of Thailand's present day capital, Bangkok; and representations of Indra's royal mount, the 33-headed elephant, Erawan (usually portrayed with only three heads), is an ubiquitous emblem above the doors and gateways of Bangkok's public buildings. Angkorian kings once identified themselves with Indra. Indra provides kings with ceremonial glitter and regal aura (Gosling 1991: 64).

The royal consecration (*abhiṣeka*) of king Luthai (1347-about 1370) was performed by the rulers of the four directions, or the Catur-Mahārājikas. It is interpreted by Gosling (1991: 65) as the aristocracy

of the outlying areas who bestowed the regalia of the crown, the sword and the white parasol to legitimise the reign of Luthai. The consecration of king Luthai must have been done on the level of the human realm as a *cakravartin* when he conquered Sukhothai and became its ruler under the designation of Mahādharmarāja I, due to the righteousness of his previous lives. The second coronation on the plane of the Caturmahārājika paradise. On the third plane he was firmly established in the royal city of Sukhothai which was Indra's city in which the Buddhist *stūpa* and the pulpit for preaching Buddhism were located outside the city. He located his palace close to the centre of the city, but outside the monastery walls. Buddhist structures have to be outside the city of Indra.

The Thai Book of Palace Law (Kaṭa Maṇḍirapāla) gives an account of Indrābhiṣeka. For this royal ceremony a Meru is built in the middle of an open space. Indra sits on it. The details of the ceremony can be read in Wales (1931:122-123). Its performance is recorded for AD 1510 when Rāmādhipati II brought the northern part of modern Thailand under the sway of Ayudhya. During the tonsure ceremony, which resembles the coronation, Śiva presents *vajirāvudha* or adamant mace of Indra to the candidate (Wales 1931: 134).

The *aindra mahābhiṣeka* is clearly reflected in the Preah Ko stele of Indravarman I, dated AD 877. The three stanzas 6-8 of this inscription are:

6. *yenābhiṣikto vidhinā mahendras
svayambhuvāropitadevarājyaḥ/
tenābhiṣeka[m] guṇavān anekam
yaś śrīndravarmāpad avāryya-vīryaḥ//*
7. *prathamam labdharājyo yaḥ pratijñām kṛtavān iti/
itaḥ pañcadinād ūrdhvaṁ prārapsye kṣananādikam//*
8. *śrīmat-simhāsanaṁ śrīndra- yānam śrīndravimānakam/
śrīndraprāsādakam haimam bheje yas svadhiyā kṛtam//*
6. C'est par le rite grâce auquel Svayambhū a sacré Mahendra en l'élevant à la royauté divine [ou: a consacré (le mont) Mahendra en y établissant le culte du Devarāja] que Śrī Indravarman, doué

de tous les mérites et d'un héroïsme irrésistible, a reçu un sacre qui n'est pas unique.

7. Dès qu'il eut reçu le pouvoir royal, il fit cette promesse: "Dans cinq jours, à partir d'aujourd'hui, je commencerai à creuser, etc."
8. Il possédait le vénérable trône aux lions, le (véhicule) Śrī Indrayāna, le (palais) Śrī Indravimānaka et le (pavillon) Śrī Indraprāsādaka, fait en or selon son propre dessein. (Coedès 1937: 20,25).

The context, meaning and significance of these three stanzas was missed by Coedès. Majumdar (1953:65) pointed out that the exact sense is not clear. The sixth stanza makes the association of the sequence of the coronation ceremonies clear beyond doubt. It says explicitly that Indravarman was crowned and consecrated by those very ceremonies (*vidhinā*) by which Indra (*Mahendra*) attained the glorious domain of gods (*devarājyaḥ*) coronated by Svayambhū. Thus: *Mahendra* is Indra, *Svayambhū* is Prajāpati, *devarājya* is the domain of Devarāja that is Indra. The next stanza goes on to clarify the association with Indra in more explicit terms by prefixing Indra to *yāna*, *vimānaka* and *prāsādaka* when it says that as soon as Indravarman obtained the kingdom, he made a vow (*pratijñā*) that within five days I will begin excavations (*khanana*) and other (*ādikaṃ*) preparations for creating the coronation plaza. The excavations had to be undertaken to get sufficient earth to raise a *vimāna* or "tower surmounting a sanctuary in the centre ... *Vimānas* are buildings of one to twelve storeys and are used as residences of gods and men" according to the *Mānasāra* in its chapter 18 on *vimāna* (18.2,3). *Vimāna* is a seven-storeyed building in the *Rāmāyaṇa* 1.5.16, and in *Medinī* lexicon (N121). Acharya (1934:1.551-556) gives a number of references to texts and inscriptions on the meaning of *vimāna*. The *vimāna* represents the Meru in architecture. The Meru arises in the centre of the four continents surrounded by four oceans. The dug up earth was used to raise up the man-made Mount Meru in five storeys and the dug up parts of the complex resulted in ponds and symbolised the oceans. The five-stepped pyramidal Meru has been called "temple mountain" in European works. It was not a mountain with any temple, but a specific structure with five terraces, technically designated *indravimānaka* in the inscription, Mahāmeru or Meru as the residence

of Indra. The first man-made Meru is the Bakong, constructed under the personal supervision of Indravarman and completed in 881, and called Indravimānaka as it was intended for his *aindra mahābhiṣeka*. The aerial photograph of Bakong (Bhandari 1996:25) gives a clear view of the Meru with five storeys topped by a temple (*indraprāsā-daka*). Several other five-terraced Merus are found in Cambodia. To name a few:

AD	Name	Illustration in
10th century	Phimean-akas	Bhandari 37
968-1001	Ta Keo	Bhandari 34
1050-66	Baphuon	Bhandari 35, 31
1113-50	Angkor Wat	Bhandari 31
1181-1219	Bayon	Bhandari 31

The Angkor Wat is a five-stepped pyramid achieved by raising laterite walls of all the five steps right from the ground level and filling the intervening space with earth as the walls gained in height. The moat around Angkor Wat was as natural result of the excavation of earth required to fill the vast intervening courtyards between the various enclosures. The Meru was built not on filled earth, but by filling earth (Bhandari 1996:135). Our inscription refers to this operation at Bakong as *khanan-ādikam*.

Indraprāsādaka of the inscription refers to the golden edifice on top of the Meru. It represents the Sudarśana palace of Indra wherein the great *aindra* coronation took place. As the heart of the architectonics of coronation it was gilded (*haimam*).

To reach the coronation plaza, an Indra-yāna or Indra-vehicle was also wrought. It must have been a magnificent vehicle for a royal procession in style and splendour. It corresponds to the imposing and extraordinarily high carriages used for royal coronations in Thailand and called *vaijayanta* in Thai. They can be seen at the National Museum, Bangkok.

The throne (*śrīmat sinhāsanam*) must also have been carpented with the special woods, specified for *aindra mahābhiṣeka*, namely that of the four kinds of trees: *nyagrodha*, *udumbara*, *aśvattha* and *plakṣa* (Keith p. 332). The *nyagrodha* confers upon the king lordly power, *udumbara* confers paramount rule, *aśvattha* confers overlordship, and

plakṣa confers self-rule and sovereignty. This is imperative for a *kṣatriya* who desires: “May I win all victories, find all worlds, attain the superiority, pre-eminence, and supremacy over all kings and overlordship, paramount rule, self rule, sovereignty, supreme authority, kingship, great kingship and suzerainty; may I be all encompassing, possessed of all the earth, possessed of all life, from the one end up to the further side of the earth bounded by the ocean sole ruler” (Keith 332).

All the four items of coronation, the vehicle, the pyramidal Meru, Indra’s palace atop, and the throne within, are prefixed by *śrī* which emphasises that they were meant for royal use: *śrīmat siṃhāsanam* (throne), *śrīndrayānam* (chariot), *śrīndravimānakam* (pyramidal structure), *śrīndraprāsādakam* (palace). Casparis (1958:25) says that *śrī* precedes royal titles and is a “royal predicate”. King Indravarman himself designed and supervised (*svadhiyā kṛtam*) everything to exclude any eventuality. The *paraphernalia* and architectural constructions followed the prescriptions for the ideal coronations of Indra the King of Gods (Deva-rāja) in the Vedic rites. The sixth stanza explicitly points out that rites by which Mahendra was consecrated by Svayambhū in being elevated to the Kingship of the Gods (*devarājyaḥ*), by those very rites Indravarman, the meritorious and of irresistible heroism, attained the multipurpose (*anekam*) consecration.

The translation of Coedès and of Majumdar has to be revised in the light of the above observations.

The word *devarāja* occurs thrice in the Sdok Kak Thom inscription (stanzas 29, 61, 63, Chakravarti 1980: 2:19, 32, 34). Stanza 29 has *devarājābhikhyām vahanṭīḥ siddhīḥ* “the siddhis that strengthened the glory of the Devarāja”. Stanza 61 speaks of the worship of the Devarāja (*devarājasya ... cakrur arcām*) by the royal priests. Stanza 61 again refers to the worship of Devarāja (*devarāj-arcana*). In all of them Devarāja means the icon used for the Devarāja coronation, or the *aindra mahābhiṣeka*. The first coronation icon of Jayavarman II became the national palladium, while the coronation icons of later kings were restricted to individual kings. Whenever they shifted the capital, the national palladium accompanied them.

The Khmer portion of the SKT inscription says that His Majesty Parameśvara i.e. Jayavarman II consecrated *kamrateṇ jagat ta rāja* in the town of Śrī-Māhendra-parvata (line 56: *man vraḥ pāda*

Parameśvara pratiṣṭhā kamrateṇ jagat ta rāja “nau nagara Śrī-Māhendraparvata). *Pratiṣṭhā* means consecration of the palladium, and not merely its material installation as Coedès takes it (1946:103 n. 2). Coedès interprets *kamrateṇ jagat ta rāja* “the master of the universe, who is the king” and regularly equates it with *devarāja*. This term occurs in several passages of the Cambodian portion (Chakravarti 2.99, 102, 103, 107, 110, 135, 136, 140, 143). Its variant is *kamrateṇ añ ta rāja* (Chakravarti 2.100). The Koh Ker inscription (AD 921-932) of Jayavarman IV has *kamrateṇ añ jagat ta rājya* (Coedès 1937:49), and the Prasat Khna inscription *kamrateṇ añ ta rājya* (Coedès 1946:10). The phrase *kamrateṇ jagat ta rāja/rājya* means “[an icon of the] Lord of the Universe (*jagat*) as well as of the Kingdom (*rāja/rājya*)”. *Rāja* is the Middle Indic form of *rājya* “kingdom”. It is He who protected the kingdom of Cambodia (Chakravarti 1980:2.102). This term does not identify the icon as pertaining to any one of the Trinity of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Īśvara. The coronation icon of Jayavarman II, was given a genetic appellation of Devarāja, having been used in the Devarāja/Indra coronation.

The coronation of Indra was conducted by Prajāpati. The coronation of Jayavarman II too had to have the divine presence of Prajāpati for sanctity and effectiveness. Prajāpati is Brahmā. The famous Sanskrit lexicon Amarakośa gives twenty synonyms of Brahmā. Among them the following are relevant to the present discussion: Brahmā, Lokeśa, Prajāpati, Ātmabhū, Svayambhū. He is also known as Sahāmpati or Lord of the Earth, our terra firma. In the Cambodian *kamrateṇ jagat ta rāja/rājya*, *jagat* reminds of Brahmā as the Lord of the Universe, as Prajāpati or Svayambhū and *rāja* alludes to him as Lokeśa or Sahāmpati. *Brahma ca kṣatram ca* has been a coupled notion of spiritual authority for temporal power. Rājan and Brahman existed in symbiosis. Regnum and flamonium were two living paradigms in the Roman political order. The Latin word *regnum* and *flamen* are cognate to Rājan and Brahman. The root *br̥n̥h* is at the base of Brahman, and also of burg, borough, Gothic *baurgs* “city”, OE *beorg* “mountain”. An intrinsic relationship exists between Brahman, the city, the acropolis and mountain since Indo-European times. Brahmā or Prajāpati could be present in a number of forms. The Cambodian inscriptions speak of the installation of Liṅgas. Liṅga can have three forms: (i) phallus, (ii) image, and (iii) pivot. Their political

function too was of three kinds: (i) as the national palladium, (ii) as the coronation icon of the ruling king, and (iii) as ancestral images legitimating the royal descent of the king. The coronation icon represented *devayāna* and the ancestral icon *pitryāna*.

Brahmā can be present in the royal coronation rites as Svāyambhuva Liṅga, the most superior (*uttamottama*) of Liṅgas (Rao 1914: 2.80). Though the *Kāmikāgama* describes it as one which came into existence by itself, it means a Liṅga related to Svayambhū or Brahmā. The name of the first Manu is Svāyambhuva: he is the first king of mankind. Svāyambhuva Liṅga is shown in phallic form at the beginning of the Thai iconographic manual entitled *Devarūpa*. The only monument known to have been dedicated exclusively to Brahmā as an image in all Cambodian history was by King Jayavarman IV. He consecrated Prasat Banteay Pir Chan in 937 to Prajāpatiśvara (Brahmā) (Briggs 1951:122). It was a must for him "leaving no other supporter in his race than himself". He conquered the royal city of Yaśodharapura, took the national palladium (*kamrateñ jagat ta rāja*) and its royal priest Īśānamūrti to establish his new capital at Chok Gargyar (Koh Ker). The third way of representing the Liṅga was a tunnel shaft in the centre of the Meru. Under the central tower of Angkor Wat, G. Trouvé discovered a tunnel shaft which goes down 27 metres to the original ground level (Henri Parmentier, *Guide to Angkor*, quoted in Bhandari 1996:135). This is the Brahmādāru to stabilise the weight of the galleries and towers.

The icon used by Jayavarman II for his *aindra mahābhiṣeka*, his Devarāja = Indra (icon), became the symbol of the Cambodian state, as the sacred and secular sovereignty denoted by Prajāpatiśvara/Brahmā, as the continuity of the vital flow of the universal (*jagat*) into the stability of the terrestrial kingdom (*rāja* = *rājya*). As the founder of the new Kambuja state, he contributed a national palladium under its Cambodian appellation *kamrateñ jagat ta rāja/rājya*. Whenever the capital was transferred by his successors, it was taken to the new nagara, for it had to be constantly in the capital. The SKT inscription says that whatever be the capital where the kings went to reside, the palladium (*kamrateñ jagat ta rāja*, lines 80-81) was also brought there. A parallel tradition exists in Champa. The Bhadrēśvara-svāmī consecrated by Bhadravarman at Myson became the national palladium of the Chams. It was maintained and restored by subse-

quent kings; e.g. Śambhuvarman re-established the temple of Bhadravarman which was burnt at the time of his father, added his own name to that of the original founder, and re-named the image as Śambhu-Bhadreśvara (Majumdar 1927:37).

Besides the national palladium, the ruling king had his personal coronation image, denoted by Liṅga in the inscriptions, and named after him + Īśvara.

Moreover, temples were built by kings to enshrine the images of their ancestors to impress their distinguished lineage, genuine royal ancestry, their blue blood, to strengthen their claim to the throne. Yaśovarman I “built up an elaborate family tree, connecting himself through his mother with the ancient kings of Funan and Chenla” (Briggs 1951: 105). His maternal descent was given a prominent place in the Loley temple, which he completed in 893 at the beginning of his reign, with four towers dedicated to Śiva and Bhavānī:

front towers	:	Indravarmēśvara	(father)
	:	Mahīpateśvara	(maternal grandfather)
rear towers	:	Indradevī	(mother)
	:	Rājendradevī	(maternal grandmother)

The portrait statue of the father was a common practice under the term Vaprakeśvara in Indonesia as well as in India (Poerbatjaraka 1926:62-82).

Coedès (1952b:51) considers Angkor Wat as a mausoleum of its founder. The Cambodian monuments were meant to exalt and not to deify the king. Moron (1977:234) has worked out the encoding of time and space at Angkor Wat and she concludes that Viṣṇu was consecrated in the central sanctuary in late July of 1131 for the coronation of Sūryavarman. He began work on Angkor Wat soon after he came to power. His birth date of 1021 is on the south while that of the temple (home of the gods) is on the north. This agrees with the north-south dichotomy of divinity and royalty in the third gallery (*ib.* 235). The life of the King is closely related to the dimensions of the axes of the third gallery. The central tower has 44 columns around and it itself is a symbol for the 45th deity of the *vāstu-puruṣa-maṇḍala*, who is Brahmā. The central tower is thus Brahmā (*ib.* 254-261). From the moment the visitor crosses the bridge to Angkor Wat, numerology leads to Brahmā in the central sanctuary. Brahmā as the centremost

point indicates that Angkor Wat is a coronation Sumeru of Sūryavarman. Brahmā fashioned Jayavarman out of a half of each from Śiva and Viṣṇu, and he took from Śiva his power and handed it over to Jayavarman (inscriptions of Prasat Chrun and Angkor Thom, K281, K288 in *Inscriptions du Cambodge* 4.207-250). Sūryavarman too derived his power from Brahmā, who as Prajāpati crowned Indra the King of Gods. The reliefs in the third gallery reflect the glorious achievements of Sūryavarman. The history of his reign begins with the scene on the western wall. The slaughter at Kurukṣetra alludes to his own battle for the throne. On the southern wall the King is reviewing his troops, his prisoners of war and his ministers. At the central entrance chambers of the corridor Yama appears, his decisions send unfortunate people into the thirty-two hells while others quietly ascend to the heavens. Herein Sūryavarman is glorified as Dharmarāja: "If there are any traitors among us, may they be reborn in the thirtytwo hells ..." In the next scene on the east wall, churning of the ocean yields eternity through *amṛta*. The *devas* and *asuras* are working together under Viṣṇu. Again an analogy to the cooperation of former enemies under the new King Sūryavarman. The churning of the ocean is illumined by the rising Sun (Sūrya) every morning. It becomes brighter as the sun ascends. Likewise, the Sun, King Sūryavarman initiated an era of prosperity and promise, though he had acquired power through bloodshed. The two scenes oscillate in reciprocity. Sūryavarman is glorified in epic and divine terms. Gods in the northern sector and the historic king in the southern are celestial and terrestrial forces in dynamic interaction. The opinion of Coedès (1952b:51) that Angkor Wat is a mausoleum of its founder cannot hold ground any more. It is a poetic vision of the charisma of success and a divine dwelling like the Trayastriṃśa heaven of Indra, peopled by the loveliest women unrivalled for their beauty and musical talents (Saletore 1982:2.560). Indra is known as *Apsaraḥ-pati* in Hemacandra's *Abhidhāna-cintāmaṇi*. He is portrayed as a sensual, fun-loving deity who revels in beautiful parks. Hence the long array of divine beauties on the walls of Angkor Wat, a veritable paradise of Indra, for king Sūryavarman. The female *devatā* on Angkor Wat represent the glories of the paradise of Indra, as described in the *Trai Phum* written by King Luthai in AD 1345 as a text permeated by

royal interests and themes: “Indra’s devatā attendants, who are generally adorned with much jewelry and many ornaments made pretty by the seven kinds of gems, and look beautiful, decked out in many various colors, visit and have an audience with him; they come in great numbers, and cannot be fully counted. They include 24,000,000 *devatā* who are Indra’s wives ... Indra then goes to play at one of the parks where he enjoys himself a great deal. The heavenly path is 40,000 *wa* wide and there are a great number of beautiful female attendants who wear all kinds of superb ornaments. Thus they go to play in the pleasure park” (Reynolds 1982: 231-232). Over two thousand *apsaras* illustrated at Angkor Wat characterise it as the veritable paradise of Indra, which it had to be as a coronation temple, as well as the symbol of the style and splendour of Sūryavarman’s court. In the *Aitareya-brāhmaṇa*, Udamaya Ātreya anointed King Aṅga with the *aindra mahābhiṣeka*. Aṅga went conquering all round, and

Of those brought from each country,

All daughters of wealthy men,

Ten *thousands* he gave,

Ātreya, with *necklaces* in their necks. (Keith 337)

Devarāja in the SKT inscription refers to the coronation icon of Jayavarman II, the founder of the Cambodian state. In Old Khmer language it was called *kamrateñ jagat ta rāja* (KJR) “The Lord of the Universe as well as of the State”, “the King of Heaven and Earth”. Under this designation it became the national palladium. Any successor of Jayavarman II who had it (KJR) was the King of Cambodia. Besides, he had a personal regnal icon for the coronation. This coronation icon was the Liṅga, named after the king + Īśvara.

The terms can be summarised as follows:

Devarāja = Indra → *Aindra mahābhiṣeka* → icon used for it.

Kamrateñ jagat ta rāja = Prajāpati/Svayambhū/Brahmā → His Icon (image or *liṅga*) used for the coronation of Jayavarman II → national palladium.

Māhendra-parvata “Mount of Indra the Great” = coronation pyramid of Jayavarman II.

Vimāna or *Parvata* = temple mountain or five-storeyed pyramid = Meru on which Indra was coronated → coronation mount.

Prāsāda = the temple on top of the coronation mount.

Liṅga → name of king + Īśvara “the Liṅga established by King so and so” → coronation icon.

The Devarāja ceremonies are a continuation of the Ṛgvedic *aindra mahābhiṣeka*, on semantic grounds as well as by the continuing association of Indra with the royal rites in Cambodia, besides their uninterrupted performance inherited by Thailand. The Thais have even preserved the technical term *Indrābhiṣeka* in the Book of Palace Law.

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